DC
SUICIDE SQUAD
56
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SUICIDE SQUAD:
THE DRAGON'S HOARD
OSTRANDER
YALE
ISHERWOOD
CAMPANELLA

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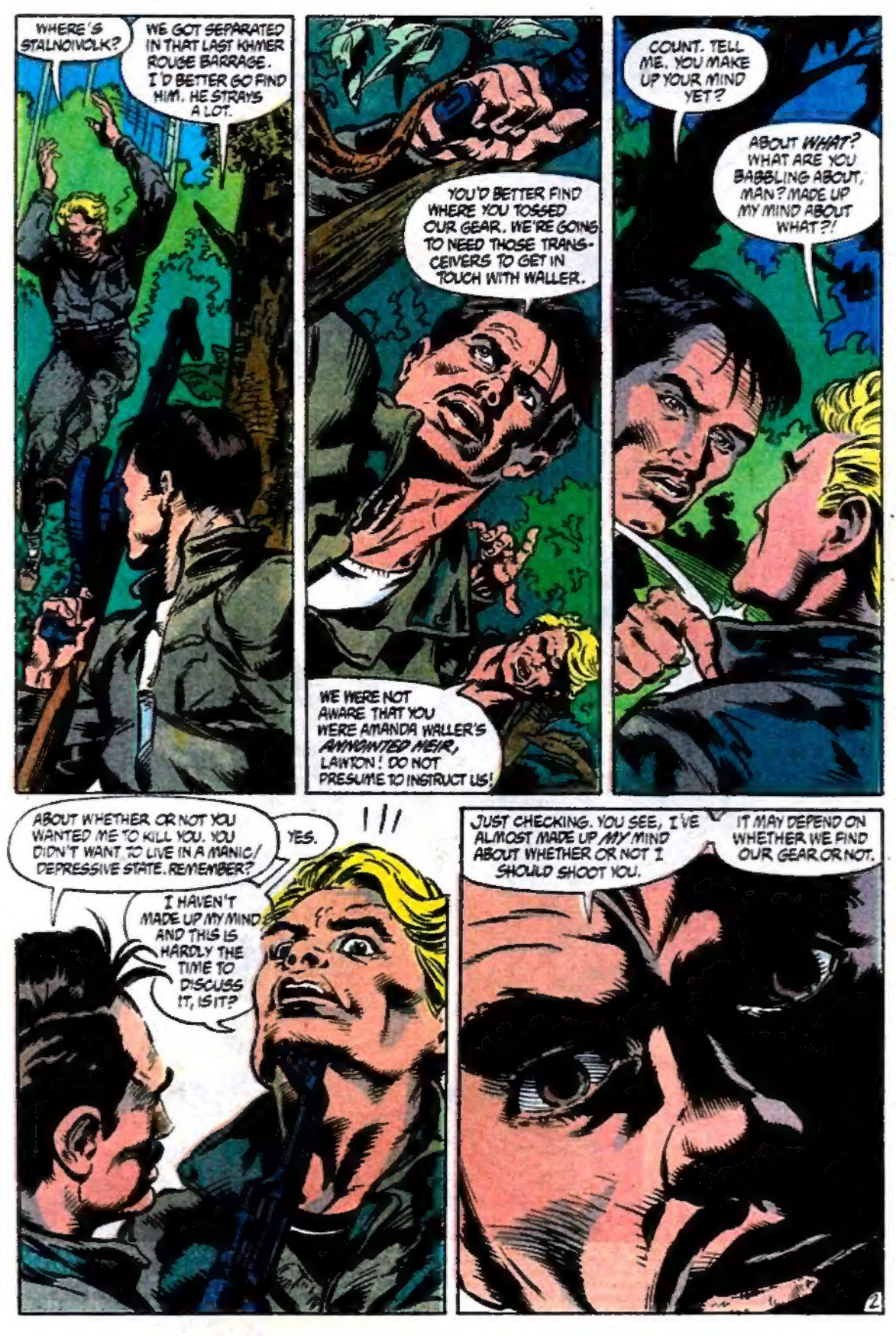
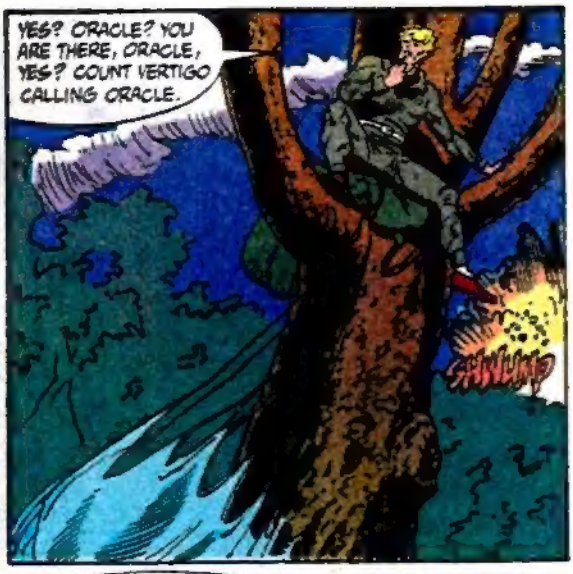

WHERE'S STALNOVOLK?
WE GOT SEPARATED IN THAT LAST KHMER ROUGE BARRAGE. I'D BETTER GO FIND HIM. HE STRAYS A LOT.
YOU'D BETTER FIND WHERE YOU TOSSED OUR GEAR. WE'RE GOING TO NEED THOSE TRANS-CEIVERS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH WALLER.
WE WERE NOT AWARE THAT YOU WERE AMANDA WALLER'S ANNOINTED HEIR, LAWTON! DO NOT PRESUME TO INSTRUCT US!
COUNT. TELL ME. YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND YET?
ABOUT WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT, MAN? MADE UP MY MIND ABOUT WHAT?!
ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT YOU WANTED ME TO KILL YOU. YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LIVE IN A MANIC/DEPRESSIVE STATE. REMEMBER?
YES.
I HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND AND THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME TO DISCUSS IT, IS IT?
JUST CHECKING. YOU SEE, I'VE ALMOST MADE UP MY MIND ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT I SHOULD SHOOT YOU.
IT MAY DEPEND ON WHETHER WE FIND OUR GEAR OR NOT.

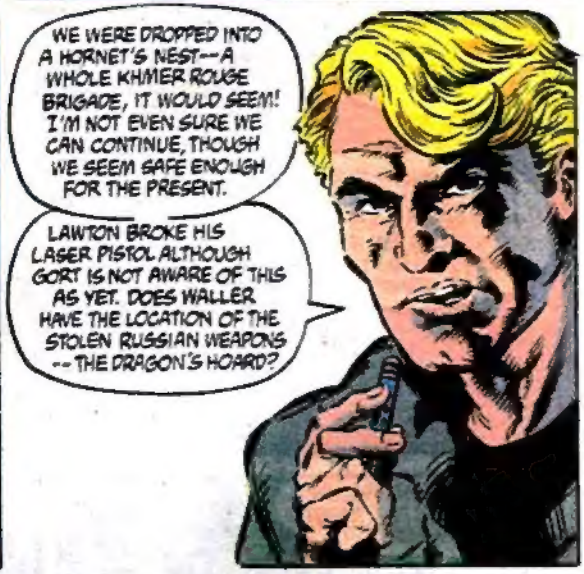
WHOOM
FEEL LIKE LOOKING FOR IT?
I BEGIN TO TIRE OF THESE COMPANIONS.
<THERE IS ONE OF THEM!>
AH! LITTLE COMRADES! WELL MET! I AM FREE OF THE OTHERS' ANNOYING PRESENCE! STALNOVOLK IS FREE TO JOIN YOU!
<LOOK! HE ATTACKS! REMEMBER HOW HE ATTACKED THE OTHERS! SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT!>
BRADDA BRADDA
BRADDA
GURK!
VIT
VIT
VIT
BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA
IS THIS HOW YOU WOULD GREET A COMRADE?
BRADDABRA

ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES FOR KILLING YOU, LITTLE COMRADES.
I ADMIRE THE KHMER ROUGE. MY OLD MASTER, STALIN, WOULD HAVE APPLAUDED YOUR TENACIOUS CLINGING TO THE TENETS OF COMMUNISM. I WISH THE MEN IN MOSCOW WERE AS TRUE TO THE FAITH.
GURK
SNAP
NAAIEE
BRADDA
UNFORTUNATELY, THESE DAYS THERE ARE FEW LIKE YOURSELVES IN MOSCOW. I AM ONE. WHICH IS WHY I MUST GET BACK TO MOSCOW.
KRAK
YOU UNDERSTAND, YES? I MUST GO BACK AND TEACH THEM ALL HOW TO BE AS GOOD COMMUNISTS AS YOU AND YOUR COMRADES.
YOU, UNFORTUNATELY, HAVE CHOSEN TO GET IN MY WAY--EH?
NICE JOB, GORT.
THE SMALL ARM'S FIRE TOLD ME WHERE TO FIND YOU. IT'LL PROBABLY TELL THE GUYS WITH THE MORTARS AS WELL.
LET'S MOVE ON. WE GOT A WEAPONS DUMP TO FIND AND DESTROY.

SHWUMP


YES? ORACLE? YOU ARE THERE, ORACLE, YES? COUNT VERTIGO CALLING ORACLE.
SHWUMP

YES! I'M HERE! THANK GOD! IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU! WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN?!


WE WERE DROPPED INTO A HORNET'S NEST--A WHOLE KHMER ROUGE BRIGADE, IT WOULD SEEM! I'M NOT EVEN SURE WE CAN CONTINUE, THOUGH WE SEEM SAFE ENOUGH FOR THE PRESENT.
LAWTON BROKE HIS LASER PISTOL ALTHOUGH GORT IS NOT AWARE OF THIS AS YET. DOES WALLER HAVE THE LOCATION OF THE STOLEN RUSSIAN WEAPONS -- THE DRAGON'S HOARD?

NO, AND WE MAY NOT EVEN HAVE WALLER! SHE WALKED INTO A TRAP AND WAS GUNNED DOWN BY YAKUZA!
I'VE MANAGED TO GET HER INTO A HOSPITAL IN TOKYO. SHE'S HAVING EMERGENCY SURGERY RIGHT NOW.

I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH THE ENTIRE TEAM. BOOMERANG AND CARMICHAEL RADIOED IN JUST AS THE WHOLE STUFF WITH WALLER WENT DOWN.
I COULDN'T TALK TO THEM AT THE TIME AND I CAN'T RAISE THEM NOW!
NO ONE ELSE ANSWERS THEIR SIGNALS, EITHER. THE WHOLE MISSION'S GONE RIGHT INTO THE TOILET!

CHARMING METAPHOR.
IF WALLER IS INCAPACITATED, WHO THEN IS IN CHARGE?

I AM. NOBODY ELSE CAN CO-ORDINATE IT.
YOU, LAWTON AND GORT PUSH ON IF YOU CAN. YOUR FIRST RENDEZVOUS ISN'T SCHEDULED FOR HOURS. ARE YOU IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER?

WE HAVE POWER ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH ANY THREAT BEING POSED.

FWADOOM!

TOKYO. THE SHINJUKU. AT THE SAME TIME...
WE FIND THIS AMONG YOUR THINGS. IT IS A SMALL RADIO. YOU WILL EXPLAIN.
OI! I'VE ALREADY BLOODY TOLD YOU, HAVEN'T I!? THE KID AND I WORK FOR THE SUICIDE SQUAD.
WE WERE HIRED TO FIND AND DESTROY A SHIPMENT OF STOLEN SOVIET GUNS-- AKA THE DRAGON'S HOARD.
BLOODY HELL! GO PICK UP WALLER! I'M GIVING YOU THE FAIR DINKUM, MATE!
FAIR DINKUM--YES. BUT THERE WAS NO MRS. WALLER AT THE HOTEL WHERE YOU SAID.
NO ONE TELLS THE WHOLE TRUTH AFTER THE FIRST TREATMENT. BUT YOU WILL TELL US ALL EVENTUALLY. THAT'S FAIR DINKUM.
OI!
<CAPTAIN ZIUKO! I HAVE LOCATED TIDEWATER!>
<HE IS WITH A WHORE AT A HOTEL NOT FAR FROM HERE!>
<VASSILI, YOU STAY. GUARD THESE TWO. WE WILL BE BACK WITH TIDEWATER AND THEN WE WILL KILL THEM ALL TOGETHER.>
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO SQUEAL RIGHT, YOU FRUITBAT! YOU ALWAYS HOLD BACK A LITTLE! I KNOW PIGS THAT DON'T SQUEAL AS BAD AS YOU.
OH? INTIMATELY?

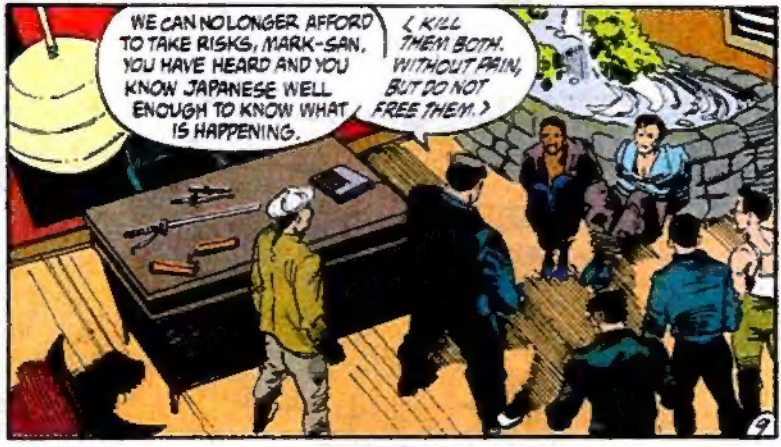
ELSEWHERE ON THE SHINJUKU AT THAT MOMENT, AT THE HQ OF THE DAIONI DOKU...
<GIVE THEM THE ANTIVENOM.>
<YES, OYABUN. I OBEY.>
GREETINGS, MARK SHAN. IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT OUR FINAL MEETING IS TO BE SO INAUSPICIOUS, JUST AS IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU REJOINED THE SERVICE OF AMANDA WALLER.
IT'S "UNFORTUNATE" THAT YOU SENT YOUR GOONS AFTER ME, RYU.
I HAD NO INTENTION OF HELPING WALLER OR RAISING MY HAND AGAINST YOU UNTIL SOME OF YOUR BOYS CAME IN AND SHOT UP SOME OF MY FELLOW EMPLOYEES.
I ACCEPT THE REBUKE. PERHAPS IT IS EVEN JUSTIFIED. AT THIS POINT, IT IS ALSO IRRELEVANT.
<REVERED OYABUN, MAY WE SPEAK?>
<IMMEDIATELY. WHERE ARE THE OTHERS? IS THE WALLER WOMAN DISPOSED OF?>
<DEAD! A STRANGE GAIJIN SHOWED UP, WHO COULD APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR AT WILL! WE FLED TO BRING WORD TO YOU.>
<ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO THAT NEED. WHAT OF THE WOMAN? DID YOU MAKE CERTAIN SHE WAS DEAD?>
8

〈WE HAD NOT A CHANCE...!〉
〈CATSEYE! TAKE SOME OF THE KOBUNS. FIND THE BLACK GAIJIN WALLER. BE CERTAIN SHE IS DEAD. IF SHE IS NOT, KILL THESE FOOLS. TAKE THEM WITH YOU.〉
〈I OBEY.〉

〈HONORED OYABUN, MAY I SPEAK?〉
〈NOW WHAT?! YES, YES--SPEAK!〉

〈THE PROSTITUTE WITH BILLY TIDEWATER HAS MADE PHONE CALLS TO THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY〉
〈WE THINK SHE MAY BE A SOVIET AGENT.〉

〈SEND MEN IMMEDIATELY TO TIDEWATER'S HOTEL ROOM! KILL THE WOMAN! TIDEWATER IS THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE DRAGON'S HOARD!〉
〈WITHOUT THOSE GUNS WE WILL NEVER TAKE OUR PROPER PLACE WITH THE OTHER CLANS!〉

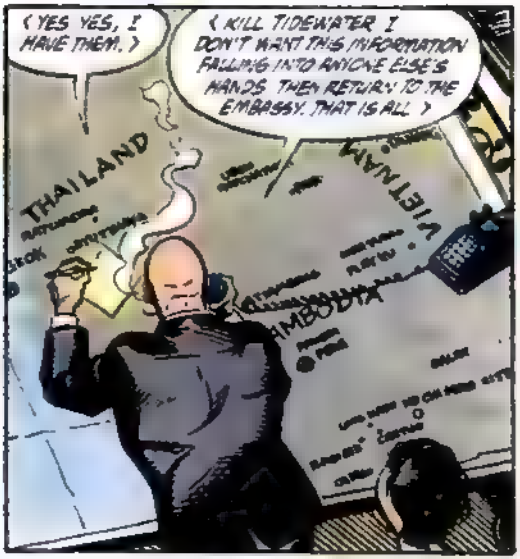

WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO TAKE RISKS, MARK-SAN. YOU HAVE HEARD AND YOU KNOW JAPANESE WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING.
〈KILL THEM BOTH. WITHOUT PAIN, BUT DO NOT FREE THEM.〉

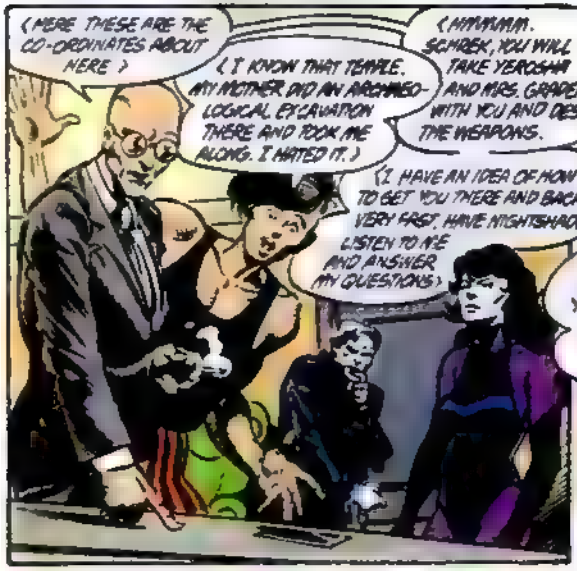
KAI!
SCHKUK
SHEK!
SHEK
WHOOK
HUUH!
HO!
SHEK
SHEK!

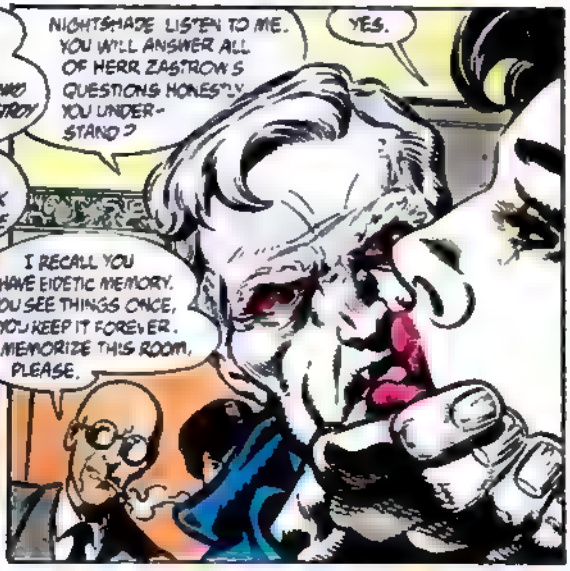
HAI!
RAK
THONK
HUUUU!
HAI! I AM--
KATANA. I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM THE SQUAD FILES ON THE OUTSIDERS. I HAD THOUGHT YOU IN CALIFORNIA.
THE MAN WHO HIRED YOU-- NOBU FUJIWARA—WAS MY COUSIN. HE WAS MURDERED AND I SWORE TO AVENGE HIS DEATH. I CAME TO EXACT IT AND FOUND YOU AND MARK SHAW.
I HAVE SAVED YOUR LIVES. YOU OWE TO ME A DEBT OF GIRI-NINJO WHICH IS .
A DEBT OF HONOR EVEN UNTO DEATH. I KNOW WHAT GIRI-NINJO IS. IT'S GOTTEN ME INTO TROUBLE BEFORE.
I'M ALSO AWARE OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF GIRI-NINJO BUT I HAVE OLDER OBLIGATIONS TO AMANDA WALLER.
IF SHE STILL LIVES, I MUST FIND HER AND PROTECT HER FROM THE ASSASSINS THE DAICHI DOKU HAVE SENT.
I ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE EARLIER COMMITMENTS BUT I MUST FIND AND DEAL WITH THE DAICHI DOKU'S OYABUN.

WHY DON'T I TAKE ON THE OBLIGATION WITH YOU, KATANA? I KNOW RYU AND HOW HE THINKS.
BEN, YOU CHECK IN BACK AT THE HOTEL, RAISE ORACLE, SEE IF SHE KNOWS WHAT'S GOING ON.
THAT WILL DO.
RIGHT.
LET'S MOVE. RYU AND CATSEYE BOTH HAVE HEAD STARTS AT THIS POINT.
AT THE SAME TIME AT THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY...
<SO, NIGHTSHADE'S WILL IS NOW YOURS, YES?>
<MORE OR LESS, HERR ZASTROW. WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR HER TO DO?>
PWING
<MY INTENTION WAS TO TURN HER INTO A DOUBLE AGENT BUT ANOTHER POSSIBILITY PRESENTS ITSELF.>
<YES? THEN REPORT, LAMIA. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF YOUR MISSION? DID TIDEWATER GIVE YOU THE LOCATION OF THE GUNS? WHAT OF ZUKO AND HIS MEN?>
2

THEY ARE PROSPECTORS OF THE KHMER ROUGE TIDEWATER BETRAYED THEM. ONLY HE KNOWS WHERE THE DRAGON'S HOARD IS LOCATED
IS IN A SMALL RUINED TEMPLE. SHA__ I GIVE YOU THE CO-ORDINATES?)


(YES YES, I HAVE THEM.)
(KILL TIDEWATER I DON'T WANT THIS INFORMATION FALLING INTO ANYONE ELSE'S HANDS. THEN RETURN TO THE EMBASSY. THAT IS ALL.)
THAILAND
VIETNAM


(HERE THESE ARE THE CO-ORDINATES ABOUT HERE.)
(I KNOW THAT TEMPLE. MY MOTHER DID AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION THERE AND TOOK ME ALONG. I HATED IT.)
(HMMMM. SCHREK, YOU WILL TAKE YEROSHA AND MRS. GRADENKO WITH YOU AND DESTROY THE WEAPONS.
(I HAVE AN IDEA OF HOW TO GET YOU THERE AND BACK VERY FAST. HAVE NIGHTSHADE LISTEN TO ME AND ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.)

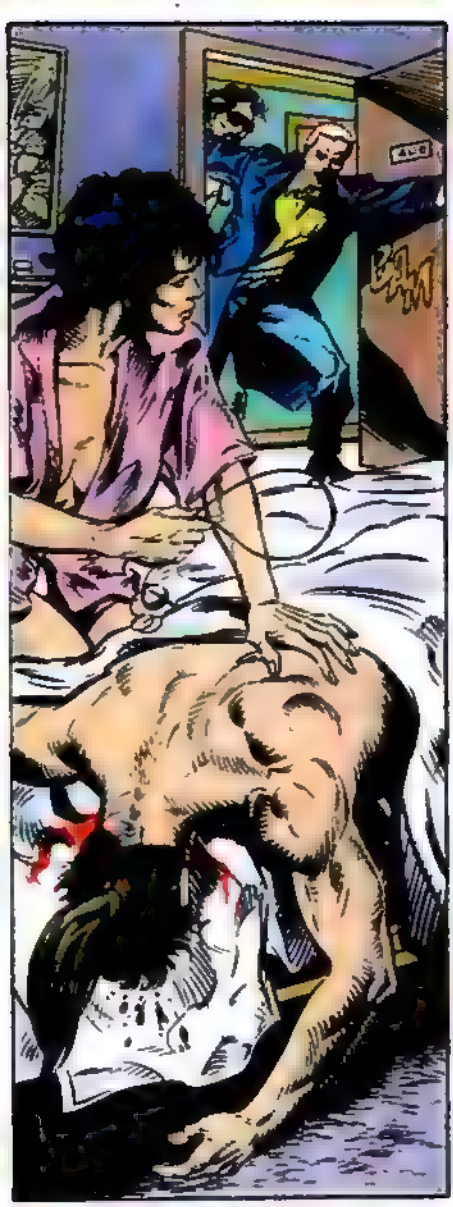

NIGHTSHADE LISTEN TO ME. YOU WILL ANSWER ALL OF HERR ZASTROW'S QUESTIONS HONESTLY. YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES.
I RECALL YOU HAVE EIDETIC MEMORY. YOU SEE THINGS ONCE, YOU KEEP IT FOREVER. MEMORIZE THIS ROOM, PLEASE.

IT IS SH FOR YOU TO TRANSPORT THE RED SHADOWS USING ONE OF YOUR DIMENSIONAL TUNNELS. YOU CAN DO THIS YES?
IF -- I MUST BUT... I CANNOT DO IT BLIND I MUST HAVE A MENTAL PICTURE OF WHAT THE PLACE LOOKED LIKE

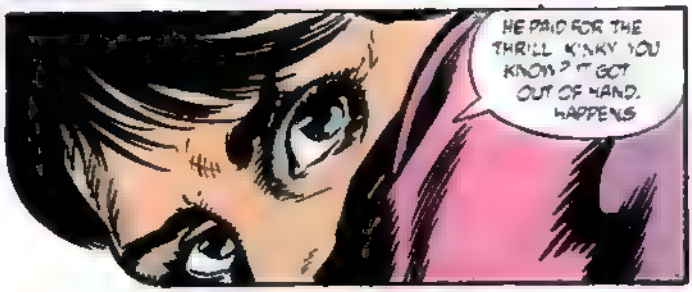
THAT CAN BE ARRANGED YEROSHA!

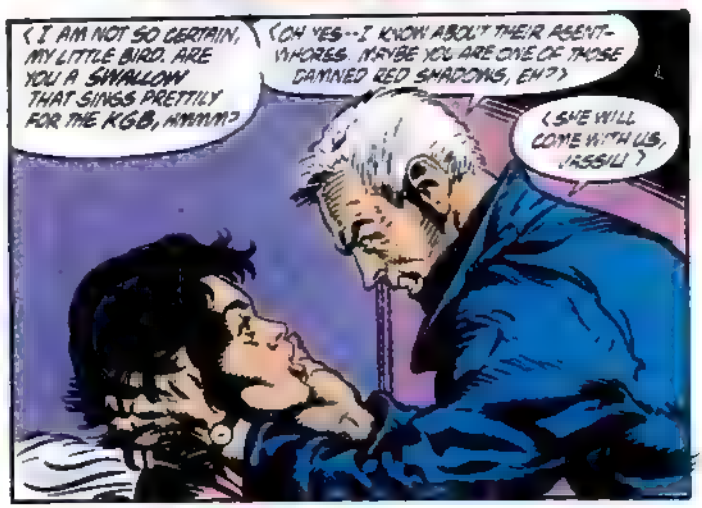
(WHAT? WHY ARE YOU YELLING AT ME? I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING!)
(YOU ARE ABOUT TO. YOU WILL NOW PROJECT AN IMAGE OF THE TEMPLE IN THE CAMBODIAN JUNGLE ONTO THE OPTIC NERVE OF THE AMERICAN.)
(I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO IT. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. I DON'T REMEMBER IT VERY WELL.)
(NONSENSE. I KNOW YOUR FILE. YOU DO HAVE EIDETIC MEMORY USE IT.)
(IF I DO IT, CAN I STAY HERE? I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK THERE! I HATE THE JUNGLE!)
(IF YOU DON'T BEGIN I WILL FEED YOU TO SCHADEK! I AM LOSING MY PATIENCE!)
(WHY DID I EVER LEAVE THE BLACK MARKET?)
YOU SEE THAT, NIGHTSHADE? YOU CAN TRAVEL THERE. YES?
YES. YES.
THEN YOU WILL BEGIN
YES.
KOOM

(GO ON, MRS. GRADENKO. FOLLOW THE OTHER WOMAN INSIDE. NOW!)
WUKK
(BY THE WAY SCHREK, IF YOU FIND ANY OTHER META-HUMANS AT THE TEMPLE EXCEPT THE ONES THAT CAME WITH YOU... FEEL FREE TO SUP TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.)
STREWTH, WOMAN... I'M ALL SHAGGED OUT!
BUT I'VE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST...
...WHEN PLEASURE AND PAIN BECOME AS ONE.
GURK

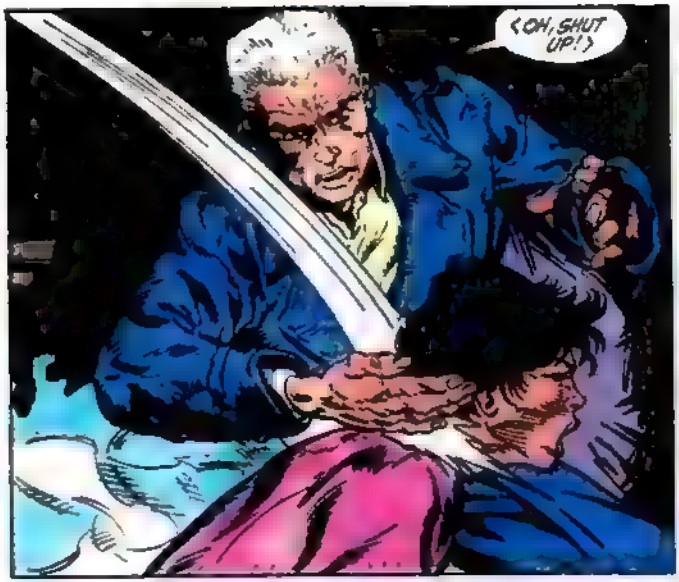


(HE'S BEEN GAROTTED. TIDEWATER'S DEAD, CAPTAIN!)
(OFF, COW!)


HE PAID FOR THE THRILL. KINKY, YOU KNOW? IT GOT OUT OF HAND. HAPPENS.


(I AM NOT SO CERTAIN, MY LITTLE BIRD. ARE YOU A SWALLOW THAT SINGS PRETTILY FOR THE KGB, MMMM?)
(OH YES--I KNOW ABOUT THEIR AGENT-WHORES. MAYBE YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE DAMNED RED SHADOWS, EH?)
(SHE WILL COME WITH US, JASSIL!)

(I AM NOT A SWALLOW. I AM A FIREBIRD--PASS ON INCARNATE. MMM--YOUR HAND SO STRONG SO--


(OH, SHUT UP!)

(YAKUZA! FIVE, SIX-- MAYBE MORE)

(MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT! MOVE IT MOVE IT MOVE IT!)

SLAM!

BLAM
406
PING
PING
BOOM

(VASSIL! BRING THE GIRL.)

(NOW WE HAVE THREE PRISONERS TO INTERROGATE, EH, VASSIL!?)
406

I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO MY PASSPORT TEN TIMES ALREADY!

AND PERHAPS ON THE ELEVENTH TRY YOU WILL TELL ME THE TRUTH, MR. CRAY
YOUR SITUATION IS QUITE SERIOUS--YOU HAVE NO PASSPORT, NOR DOES CUSTOMS HAVE ANY RECORD OF YOUR ENTERING JAPAN
18

MY PASSPORT, AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, MUST HAVE BEEN STOLEN BY THE SAME GUYS WHO SHOT DOWN THAT POOR WOMAN.

THAT DOES NOT EXPLAIN WHY YOU HAVE NO VISA. THERE IS ALSO THE MATTER OF THE SHOOTING.

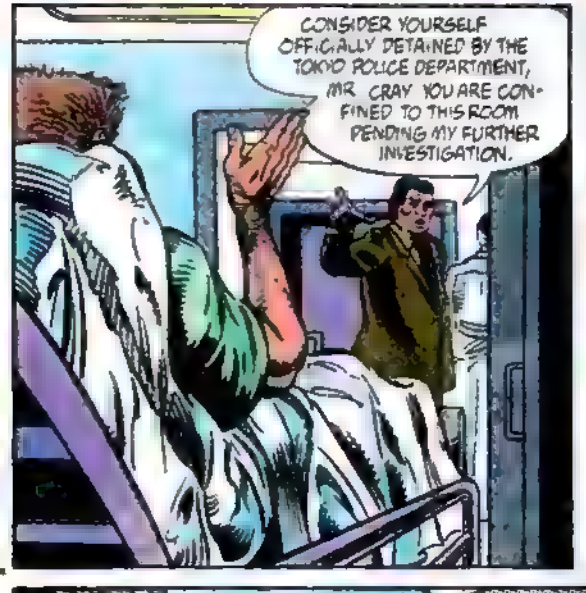
WHO IS THE WOMAN?
ER--
THE MEN WHO SHOT HER DOWN WERE YAKUZA. DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE YAKUZA, MR. CRAY?
ERRMM, THE YAKUZA? I ER DON'T KNOW--
SOME OF THEM ARE DEAD. HOW DID THEY DIE?
DEAD? HOW--
ARE YOU AND THE WOMAN WHO WAS SHOT--

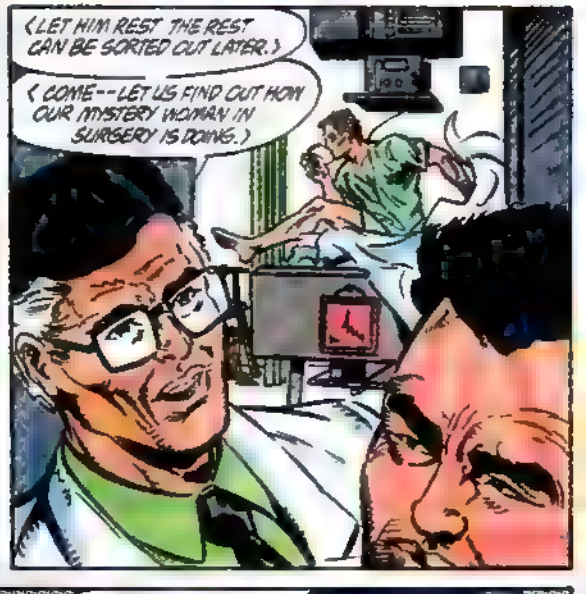
SURELY THIS CAN ALL WAIT UNTIL LATER.
MR. CRAY IS HURT, ALTHOUGH WE'RE NOT SURE WHY HE COLLAPSED OR THE NATURE OF HIS PROBLEM.
YOU GET BETTER ANSWERS FROM PEOPLE WHEN THEY HAVE RECOVERED FROM SHOCK.

HOW IS THE WOMAN WHO WAS HURT?

SHE IS IN EMERGENCY SURGERY RIGHT NOW. WE ARE LUCKY SHE WAS STILL ALIVE WHEN THEY BROUGHT HER TO THE HOSPITAL.

( I WILL LET THIS RIDE FOR RIGHT NOW--BUT I AM NOT SATISFIED HIGHER OFFICIALS HAVE ARRANGED THIS, AND I INTEND TO FIND OUT WHO AND WHY.)


CONSIDER YOURSELF OFFICIALLY DETAINED BY THE TOKYO POLICE DEPARTMENT, MR. CRAY. YOU ARE CONFINED TO THIS ROOM PENDING MY FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

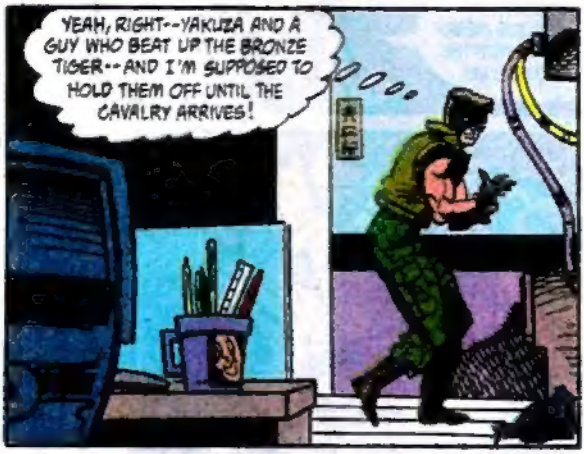

(LET HIM REST. THE REST CAN BE SORTED OUT LATER.)
( COME--LET US FIND OUT HOW OUR MYSTERY WOMAN IN SURGERY IS DOING.)

WONDER IF JAPANESE COPS EAT DONUTS AND DRINK COFFEE HOT AND BLACK?

TALK TO ME, ATOM--WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE?
RAY PALMER ONCE WARNED ME ABOUT TRAVELLING VIA SATELLITE TRANSMISSIONS--SAID THE FIRST TIME WAS THE LAST TIME HE EVER DID IT.
NOW I KNOW WHY--IT PLAYS MERRY HELL WITH THE PHYSIOLOGY.
HOLD ON, GRAY--I'M FINALLY GETTING A TRANSMISSION FROM TURNER!
GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT--WHICH HOSPITAL IS AMANDA AT, AND IS SHE ALIVE?
TURNER! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AND SHAW?! HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT AMANDA?!
LATER, ORACLE--OKAY?
DAICHI DOKU ALSO KNOW AMANDA MAY BE ALIVE AND HAVE SENT CATSEYE AND SOME GOONS OUT TO FINISH HER. I CAN'T DEFEND HER IF I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS!
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO MEDICAL CENTER. GET THERE AS FAST AS YOU CAN!
ATOM, DID YOU COPY?
21

OH YEAH, LOCAL COPS ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE LEFT A GUARD ON ME IN THE HALL. I'LL TRY TO CONVINCE HIM ABOUT THE YAKUZA WHILE TURNER HUSTLES HIS BUTT OVER HERE.

UH OH. I GOT A BAAAAAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!
ORACLE, THERE'S NO COP IN THE HALL. THERE'S NOBODY.
FIND AMANDA. HOLD THINGS OFF. I'LL CALL IN MORE LOCAL HELP. MOVE IT!


YEAH, RIGHT--YAKUZA AND A GUY WHO BEAT UP THE BRONZE TIGER--AND I'M SUPPOSED TO HOLD THEM OFF UNTIL THE CAVALRY ARRIVES!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND ANYTHING? ALL THE STUPID SIGNS ARE IN JAPANESE!
WAIT A SEC. THIS IS THE SURGERY! LOOKS LIKE WALLER IN THERE AND THE SURGEONS ARE BUSY WORKING. SO FAR SO GOOD!
OH HELL.
CRAY!? WHAT IS IT? CRAY?!
NEXT
The EXPLOSIVE Conclusion!!

# SUICIDE NOTES

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Dan,

I'm sorry about this, but I've spent the last three hours thinking about it and I still can't come up with an answer...

"How many Doctor Lights does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" Rock and roll...

Rol Hirst
Rushgrove Farm
Holt Head, Slaithwaite
Huddersfield, W. Yorks, HD7 5TY
England

*That's easy, Rol. It takes five. One to screw in the lightbulb, one to get yelled at by Amanda, one to be defeated by the Justice League, and two to get killed.*

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Issue #52 was one of those rare issues that rewards me for continually searching the rack of comics that I don't have on my regular reading list. I was so sure that the creative team was the same as SECRET ORIGINS #37 which featured Dr. Light! Okay, so I was wrong, but the same comic genius is there. The two Dr. Lights bickering like kids ("Me! Me!" or "My turn! My turn!") and other little touches ("My chest!", Biff A. Stopholies, etc.) just sent me into hysterics. I won't even ask what the pain was that Arthur felt in the female Dr. Light's body! All I can say is: More! More! ...Please?

See you browsing the rack,

Janine Coles
Newark, DE

* * * * *

Hey, Dan—

SUICIDE SQUAD #52, a.k.a. "The Death and Life and Death and Life and Death and Life of Dr. Light," was one of the strangest damn stories I've ever encountered. And the "waltz with the bogeyman on a hot sticky night" passage really tore me down.

Make sure Kim and John take *all* their medication, okay??

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

*Will do, Une.*

* * * * *

Dear Squad Scribes,

Issue #52 was a lot better than I initially thought it would be. When I read that it would feature Dr. Light, a major piece of dead weight on any team, I thought, "Oh, no, here comes a clunker." The story and art were not what I like to see every month in SUICIDE SQUAD, but they weren't bad either. My favorite scenes involved the clash between the new and old Dr. Lights. I snickered to myself as I read it.

In everything lies a purpose; SQUAD #52 was here as a lighthearted breather between major storylines, and within that context it did its job well.

Beyond the story of issue #52 we find the letter column and the ever cryptic Next Issue Box. I love it! You guys have me really hyped up for the next issue—my dream of seeing the Steel Wolf as a member of the Squad seems close at hand. Gort was born to hang out with people like Waller, Deadshot, and Bronze Tiger—I can't wait to see him deal with Boomerang! And not only do you have Steel Wolf, but Katana as well. Even if she doesn't stay on (as the Next Issue Box implies), she will be a welcome sight in these pages. The cover art for next issue looks spectacular, which only adds to my excitement over "The Dragon's Hoard" storyline. I'll be waiting.

Scott R. Pyle
IUP
428 Esch Hall
Indiana, PA 15705

*I hope Gort's interactions with the Squad satisfied, Scott. Personally, I can never get enough of that guy.*

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

A while ago, in another publication from the pen of the illustrious Mr. Ostrander, he wrote himself in, albeit thinly disguised, as a psychiatrist so that he could subject the lead character to a session on the couch and reap, as he was honest enough to admit this time, some "pathetic, crude buffoonery" designed for "cheap laughs," or "magnificent blend of satire and savage black humor," whichever way you look at it. Either way, that same author's ambitions have swollen from cheap shrink to second-string demon with the intent of putting another character through hell. Fortunately he carries this off with a brash and confident style that is all his own, and creates what turns out to be a very light (excuse the obvious pun)-hearted interlude episode in what is normally a very serious series. Congratulations.

While I'm here, and just for the record, I have been reading SUICIDE SQUAD consistently from the beginning of this run, yet this is the first time I have chosen to write. So not until now has it struck me that the title of the letters column might cause a few raised eyebrows in the postal service—perhaps it's time to change it to something else, "No one here gets out alive," or "Missing in Action," maybe. And just what is the possibility of Mister Biff—I mean, Mr. Ostrander writing a couple of JUSTICE LEAGUEs?

David Allmond
12 Field Avenue
Oxford, England

* * * * *

Dear Head Looney:

I really hated this latest issue, #52. Normally, I really love this series.

I realize the need for a bit of levity at times, considering the pathos that sometimes overwhelms the characters in this book, but there are extremes. My basic complaint is that this really strained—nay, exceeded the limits of suspension of disbelief which I as a reader employ. The seeds had been planted during the trip to Apokolips when we saw the spirit of Dr. Light right after his death. But to see things resolved in this fashion just doesn't make sense—or rather, did not make for an enjoyable story. At least for me.

The other contributing factor was the jarring artwork by Jim Fern. The whole thing just did not "feel" like a Suicide Squad story, though it was nice to see Murph and the others at Belle Reve. I just wish it had been under better circumstances.

Until next issue,
Cheryl Harris
Brooklyn, NY

*Thanks for taking the time to write in, Cheryl. When John and Kim first talked about the notorious "Dr. Light story," we all knew there would be a number of tried and true Squad fans who just wouldn't be interested in the radical change of pace.*

*I'm glad you've been patient; as you've seen, your patience has paid off (if Squad-action, -confusion, -violence and -characterization is what you were waiting for). What do you think of "The Dragon's Hoard" so far? Hey, that sounds like a cue...*

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Ostrander and Yale are doing it again. They've begun another multi-parter I won't be able to wait the whole month for. The Steel Wolf working for Amanda. Let's hope she and Deadshot can keep him under control. I don't think it will be much of a problem, as Amanda probably was the first person to tell him he's outdated—an antique. Well, at least told him so and *lived*.

Katana's part in all of this has yet to be seen, but it should be...different. Our writers should be able to make her act her age. I had forgotten she had been married, bore children and lost them all to violence. She and Amanda, if and when they meet, should have a certain...kinship. That sounds callous, but it may well be the truth. I shall wait and find out.

The scenes with Murphy set my mind in motion. What a great idea! Murph joins the Squad! How long would *this* guy survive?

Dan, I've thought of a great addition to the Squad. The Viking Commando. Valoric has all of the qualities to fit in the Squad. The ability, the temperament, the experience. I even have devised a way for him to reappear in the world. Let me know if you want to hear it.

Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Avenue
Portland, CT 06480

*The Viking WHO? And you say you've figured out how he can appear in the world? Well, I'll pass the news over to John and Kim, and I'm sure they'll take it under advisement—or something. Thanks for writing, Jon!*

*****

Suicide Note Takers,

SUICIDE SQUAD takes another non-American mission. I wasn't amazed at that as much as I was by the fact that Steel Wolf went with them. Not because he's a communist hard-liner, but because I didn't think he could be sprung from stir so handily. However Waller managed it impressed even me. I'm a regular reader, I'm not easily impressed. I would be interested to know exactly what kind of deal she's got going—that is, if she doesn't get killed during the present storyline. I don't think she will, but then she might get wounded real bad. How will the Squad be different if run by a "good guy"? (I should say gal.) I couldn't even begin to imagine. It would be interesting to see.

The appearance of Manhunter got me peyched even if he was peaceful for a few minutes. The other guest star whose name is known to all of us OUTSIDERS fans is a person who could really fit in on a permanent basis. I doubt it will happen, though. Enough of all these guest appearances! Get some new members.

As always, great art, writing, lettering, and letters page.

B.F. Burke
2201 Palmer Avenue, Apt. 1C
New Rochelle, NY 10801

*Great letter, B.F.*

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Dear Mr. Raspler,

Thank you so much for bringing back Katana! I must admit I probably would not have picked up SUICIDE SQUAD #53 if Tatsu had been missing on the cover. It was a very nice continuity touch when Katana mentioned her promise about Halo. This woman is a wonderful character and I had wondered why no one had utilized Katana in a storyline since the Outsiders disbanded. Metamorpho and Looker both saw the light of day in other titles, and I'm glad Mr. Ostrander and Ms. Yale decided to use Tatsu.

Here's to my favorite female samurai and a long run in SUICIDE SQUAD. I hope she appears here until the new Outsiders title comes out.

Jody Wayde Hamby
Robbins, TX

*I'm afraid we're not going to be spending much time with Katana after "The Dragon's Hoard," Jody. But as for a new OUTSIDERS series, stay on the lookout. Mike W. Barr and penciller Brian Hitch might have something to say on the subject next year.*

*****

Dear Sirs & Ma'am,

Excellent! Of the fifty plus monthly comics that I collect, I must admit that SUICIDE SQUAD and Aircel's *Cat and Mouse* are the only two that I actually look forward to each and every month. Now, I enjoy each title that I collect, but the Squad and *C&M* are consistently the best. And that's really saying something, especially when you consider your competition. Congratulations on being among the best of the best.

Now, with that said, on to the issue at hand. Issue #53 was extremely enjoyable for many reasons, prominent among which was the return of Mark Shaw to these pages. Although he's no longer Manhunter, I'm still glad to see his reappearance, and hope to see more of him in the future.

I also enjoyed the off-panel use of Deadshot this issue to bring Stalnoivolk under control. I question the wisdom of Amanda bringing the Steel Wolf into the Squad. True, he would make a powerful ally, but he would also be a devastating enemy, especially when working from inside the Squad.

I also look forward to future developments concerning the Wall's offer to Murph. While he has no powers, I believe he would make an interesting addition to the Squad.

Well, it looks like this is the title for older characters. First Barbara Gordon, now Katana. Is there any chance of Tatsu staying on with the Squad for a while?

While this is the most effective Squad yet, how about adding Peacemaker and/or Black Thorn or both? At least for a few issues?

Well, that's it for this time. See ya' in 30.

Marson Fedrick
P.O. Box 514
Ellisville, MS 39437

*Still no plans for Tatsu to stay on, Marson, but that's the second call this month for Murph to sign with the Squad.*

*Well, Squad-fans? Is Murph Squad-material? Or is he just too damn cool?*

*****

Dear Suicide Crew,

As a new reader of this title, I'd like to let you know what I think of this book. I started buying this book with issue #46 (because of the Atom, a favorite of mine) and, to be quite honest, I didn't think I'd be buying it again. Obviously, I was wrong, because I'm still here, and your new storyline "The Dragon's Hoard" seems quite promising. As always, I enjoyed the writing (Ostrander also being a favorite of mine), and I found the new art team equally satisfying. In fact, my only complaint so far is that I can't seem to keep track of all the characters in this book. Your "no costume" policy is not a favorable one, in my opinion, because it makes it difficult for new readers like myself to identify characters easily, and that in the long run is bound to affect the number of new readers you get. I understand your reasons for not wanting the team to have flashy costumes, but I'm sure that you can redesign those costumes that you feel aren't suited for the type of missions the Squad undertakes. The "new" Atom's costume is a perfect example of what I mean. His costume isn't flashy, but at least he has a costume.

Thanks.

Danny Budge
726 Prevost, St. Bruno
Quebec, J3V-3E1
Canada

*Redesign some costumes? That's an interesting idea, Danny. I'll look into it. Thanks for writing in.*

*****

The Next Issue Box That Never Was. SUICIDE SQUAD #57 is the explosive conclusion to "The Dragon's Hoard" and packs more surprises than you can shake a stick at. John, Kim, Geof, Robert, Todd, and Tom (with five pages of timely help from Tom Mandrake) have turned in a job that Squad readers are really going to devour.

I'd tell you what happens, but you'd never forgive me.

—Dan Raspler
Keeping to the shadows